Reviewer's report

Title: Double-blind randomized controlled prospective trial assessing the effectiveness of oral corticoids in the treatment of lumbar-canal stenosis in symptomatic patients.

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Reviewer: Tetsuryu Mitsuyama

Reviewer's report:

The authors honestly reported the ineffectiveness of oral steroids for lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS), although repeated epidural or nerve root steroid injections are reported to be effective. They also reported obesity made clinical symptoms worse.

This paper is too long and full of irrelevant details (i.e. general information of LSS, unnecessary statistic value, L4/5 as most affected and etc.). Tables are repetitive of the text without summarizing the content. This paper is not publishable in its current form.

However, I think if the author improved the readability (i.e. shortening the introduction and the discussion more clear, summarizing methods and results, and making the tables clear), it would be some of interest.

BACKGROUND

General information of LSS is excessive. It is better to describe the definition of LSS in this study, because there is no complete agreement on it. The following would be of interest to readers.

More than half of the patients with LSS were successfully treated without surgery.

In cases of severe LSS, surgery is recommended.


Surgical results of LSS are the same in patients over 75 as of 65-75

(Arinzon ZH, Arch Gerontol Geriatr 2003)

METHODS, RESULTS, TABLES

I recommend the authors made them more concise. Standard errors and insignificant p-values are not necessary. The authors should pay more attention on significant figures. I cannot understand the need of Table 1 and 2. Backgrounds of patients should be summarized in one table. Graphs better express results. The authors should clearly show the relation between obesity (i.e. BMI) and symptoms.

DISCUSSION

It is better to be focused on fewer topics. The following should be discussed; 1)
the reason why oral steroids were not effective although local steroid injections were reported to be effective, 2) the reason why obesity caused symptoms worse.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.